

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8472

C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 1633

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, CM

SUBJECT: TORU D'HORIZON WITH PRESIDENT AHIDJO

REF: A. YAOUNDE 1605; B. YAOUNDE 866

1. SUMMARY. PRESIDENT AHIDJO RECEIVED AMBASSADOR FOR HALF HOUR TOUR D'HORIZON, WHICH COVERED SECRETARY'S LUSAKA SPEECH, US CONCERN OVER GURC STANCE ON PUERTO RICO AND KOREA, PRESIDENT'S DESIRE FOR ADDITIONAL US AID TO TRANSCAM RAILROAD, CREDIT FOR C-130S, POSSIBLE INCREASE IN AMERICAN INVESTMENT IN CAMEROON, AND HIS INTEREST IN OUTCOME OF AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY.

2. AHIDJO RECEIVED ME ALONE. AFTER I TOLD HIM OF CONSULTATION PLANS, CONVERSATION BEGAN WITH HIS REACTION TO SECRETARY'S LUSAKA SPEECH. HE SAID HE HAD READ IT AND CIRCULATED IT AMONG HIS COLLABORATORS. GURC REACTION WAS GENERALLY POSITIVE, BUT OTHER AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS WERE MORE SKEPTICAL. HE WAS GLAD ADMINISTRATION IS FINALLY FOCUSING ON AFRICAN, ESPECIALLY SOUTHERN AFRICAN QUESTIONS. RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA WERE SUI GENERIS, REAL DIFFICULTY WOULD COME WITH SOUTH AFRICA. HE HAD READ OF SENATE FOREIGN RELATION COMMITTEE'S UNANIMOUS ENDORSEMENT OF SECRETARY'S SPEECH, AND BELIEVES REPEAL OF BYRD AMENDMENT OF ENORMOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE FOR
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AFRICANS NOW, TO SHOW THAT US MEANS WHAT SECRETARY SAID.

I TOLD HIM OF MY 1959-62 STUDY OF RHODESIAN PROBLEM TO SHOW EARLY AMERICAN INTEREST IN AREA. HE COMMENTED ON LATENESS OF US PARTICIPATION IN EFFORTS TO RESOLVE ISSUES, AND I RESPONDED BY CITING "BETTER LATE THAN NEVER" SAYING. THERE WAS NO REPEAT NO MENTION OF ANGOLA, BY CONTRAST WITH CONVERSATION WITH FONMIN KEUTCHA (REF A).

3. I MENTIONED THAT I HAD DISCUSSED MULTILATERAL QUESTIONS WITH FONMIN AND CITED VITAL IMPORTANCE US ATTRIBUTES TO PUERTO RICO, WHICH CUBA RAISES SOLELY FOR DIVISIVE ANTI-US PURPOSES. WE CONSIDER THIS INTERFERENCE IN US INTERNAL AFFAIRS. I CITED NUMEROUS FREE ELECTIONS IN PR, AND MADE POINT THAT NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES COULD NOT HID BEHIND SO-CALLED CONSENSUS OF NAG WHEN VOTING ON THIS ISSUE IN UN. HE OBVIOUSLY UNDERSTOOD BUT NODDED NON-COMMITALLY.

4. ON KOREA, I SAID THAT WE WERE DISAPPOINTED LAST YEAR WHEN CAMEROON FOR FIRST TIME VOTED AGAINST SOUTH KOREA. WE UNDERSTAND THAT GURC MAINTAINS RELATIONS WITH BOTH KOREAS. WHEN WE HAD GONE OVER ISSUE WITH FONMIN KEUTCHA, HE HAD SAID THAT IT WAS VERY COMPLICATED. I SAID THAT IT INDEED IT WAS, BUT THE BASIC PRINCIPLE WAS VERY SIMPLE: TO MAINTAIN PEACE ON THE PENINSULA AND GET TALKS GOING BETWEEN TWO KOREAS, IN KEEPING WITH UN RESOLUTION OF 1972, WHICH NORTH KOREA WAS GOING BACK ON BY TRYING TO IGNORE SOUTH KOREA AND NEGOTIATE OVER ITS HEAD. WHEN I EXPRESSED HOPE GURC MIGHT RECONSIDER VOTE THIS YEAR, HE MADE SIMILAR NON-COMMITTAL NOISES AS ON PUERTO RICO.

5. TO MY QUESTION WHETHER HE WAS SATISFIED WITH US ASSISTANCE, AHIDJO REPLIED THAT GENERALLY HE WAS, BUT THERE WAS BASIC DIS-AGREEMENT WITH US "DOCTRINE" WHICH MADE AID TO TRANSCAM III IMPOSSIBLE. US ASSISTANCE TO NORTH - I MENTIONED CONGRESSIONAL MANDATE ON RURAL POOR, FOOD PRODUCTION, POPULATION-HEALTH- WAS WELL RECEIVED BUT TOO SCATTERED. ON HIS RECENT TRIPS TO NORTHERN AND EASTERN PROVINCES, GOVERNORS AND PREFECTS HAD TOLD HIM THAT WITHOUT TRANSPORT TO EVACUATE PRODUCTS, DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS WAS BOUND TO BE SLOW.

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6. ON OWN INITIATIVE, AHIDJO RAISED QUESTION OF CREDIT FOR C-130'S (REF B). I TOLD HIM OF DEPARTMENT'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE COMMERCIAL BANK CREDITS, AND DIFFICULTY OR IMPOSSIBILITY OF SUCCEEDING FOR MILITARY AIRCRAFT. I SUGGESTED CIVIL AIRCRAFT OPTION, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF ARMED FORCES' INTENTION TO TURN AIRCRAFT OVER ON LEASE TO CAMAIR. HE SEEMED QUITE AU COURANT, THOUGH HE HAD

NOT HEARD OF RICH ARAB SHEIK WHO VISITING LOCKHEED
REP SAYS MAY WANT TO EXTEND LOAN FOR PURCHASE.

7. I TURNED CONVERSATION TO AMERICAN INVESTMENT IN
CAMEROON, REFERRING TO OPIC MISSION VISIT WHICH HE REGRETTED
HAVING MISSED, SINCE HE WAS TRAVELING IN NORTH AT TIME. I
MENTIONED FAVORABLE COMPARISONS AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN HAD
MADE BETWEEN CAMEROON AND GHANA, NIGERIA, THEIR PREVIOUS
STOPS. I SAID THERE WERE SOME POSSIBILITIES OF INVESTMENT
PROJECTS, BUT IT WOULD TAKE TIME TO DEVELOP THEM. IN
THIS CONTEXT, I ASKED HIM WHETHER HE WAS AWARE OF
CURRENT STATUS OF SHERATON HOTEL PROJECT. HE WAS NOT.
(FYI: CONTRACT TO BUILD NEW HOTEL IN DOUALA HAS BEEN GIVEN
TO FRENCH GROUP, WITH LIKELIHOOD OF SHERATON PULLING OUT OF
FOUR YEAR OLD MANAGEMENT CONTRACT FOR MT FEBE HOTEL IN
YAOUNDE. END FYI). I BROUGHT HIM BRIEFLY UP TO DATE AND
SAID IT WOULD BE SHAME IF SHERATON, AFTER CREVETTES DU
CAMEROUN, SECOND MOST VISIBLE AMERICAN BUSINESS VENTURE IN
COUNTRY, WOULD PULL OUT. I GOT IMPRESSION HE WOULD INFORM
HIMSELF ABOUT STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS.

8. FINALLY, AHIDJO ASKED ME WHO WOULD BE PRESIDENT OF
US NEXT YEAR. HE KEEPS INFORMED ON PROGRESS OF CAMPAIGN
AND SAID HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT PRESIDENT FORD. I TOLD HIM
THAT I WAS STUDENT OF AFRICAN, COMPARATIVE, AND WORLD
POLITICS AND WOULD NOT DARE MAKE PREDICTION ABOUT US.
HE SPOKE OF UNIQUE CURRENT US SITUATION AND POST-VIETNAM,
POST-WATERGATE MALAISE. I EXPRESSED VIEW THAT AMERICAN
PEOPLE HAD PRETTY WELL TRANSCENDED MALAISE AND THAT, NO
MATTER WHO WINS ELECTION, WE WOULD CONTINUE NEW FOCUS
ON AFRICA AND REST OF THIRD WORLD, AS SHOWN BY SECRETARY'S
TRIP AND HIS ATTENDANCE AT UNCTAD IV IN NAIROBI. I TOLD
HIM I WAS QUITE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT US-AFRICAN RELATIONS. HE
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WISHED ME BON VOYAGE AND ASKED THAT I CALL ON HIM AGAIN
UPON MY RETURN.
SPIRO

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